United Nations S/2004/114

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 February 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 12 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the attached letter dated 2 February 2004 from the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Mari Alkatiri. I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) José Luis **Guterres**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 12 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

It is a widely lauded consensus that Timor-Leste is a case of success. However, its institutions are still in the process of consolidation, which is one of the most important priorities of this country. I'm sure you would agree that a stable environment is a precondition to the consolidation and establishment of our institutions.

Our current forces, although having learned and achieved much, thanks to United Nations training and support, are still not ready to deal independently with our internal tensions (there are 27,000 East Timorese refugees in Indonesia), the general volatility of a nascent country and the general volatility in our region. We are therefore deeply convinced that it is necessary to extend the presence of a United Nations battalion of peacekeeping forces in Timor-Leste beyond May 2004.

Owing to our rugged terrain, limited mobility and the fragility of a new democracy, I believe that at least a battalion-sized military force, backed by helicopters, would be needed.

I would like to thank you for the support of the United Nations and your own commitment and involvement, and reaffirm to you our commitment and willingness to continue cooperating with the United Nations in order to defend the universal values of democracy and human rights.

(*Signed*) Mari **Alkatiri**
Prime Minister